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ABSTRACT

The ten stories in this book were told by Cree storytellers Peter Vandall and Joe Douquette and recorded at the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College in Saskatoon in 1982. Each story is written in Cree text, transcribed into phonetic Cree, and translated into English. All the stories were told together as parts of a single performance, each speaker taking the other's last remarks as a point of departure. The first four stories ("Being Cree," "Cree Education," "Social Control" and "The Old and the New") might be called "counseling texts," dealing with what it means to be Cree and what Cree life used to be like, compared with life today. The next three stories ("A Fast Learner," "Wishful Thinking" and "The Longest Memory") are "funny stories" to make people laugh and deal with matters which seem to lie outside the control of man, such as alcoholism and aging. One story, "The Longest Memory," is an example of an outlandish, unbelievable tale. The next two stories ("Rags to Riches" and "The Best Dancer") are autobiographical, while the last story, "The Life of a Trapper," is a plain factual account of how someone lost an eye. The Cree texts may be used to teach the language or as authentic examples of Cree literature. The term "house people" was traditionally used for Plains Cree groups around Carlton House, in Saskatchewan. The book includes extensive notes on the orthography and glossary, references, a Cree-English glossary, and an English index to the glossary. (TES)